

## Travel Tips

### CLIMATE

Sarawak enjoys a tropical climate with average daytime temperatures of 23 to 32 degrees celsius. The rainy season from November to February brings heavier rain and cool evenings.

### LANGUAGE

Malay is the national language, however, English is widely spoken throughout the state.

### GETTING AROUND

Regular flights connect the capital city, Kuching, to the major towns of Sarawak, as do express buses and boats. Hire cars, charter planes, boats and helicopters can also be hired for travel between the towns. Taxis are available in all the major towns; however they are not metered and a fare should be negotiated at the start of your journey.

### RELIGION

The official religion is Islam, there are also Christians, Buddhists and followers of various traditional beliefs. Freedom of worship is respected and churches and temples for all major religions can be found in most towns.

### WORKING HOURS

Private sector offices are open from 9:00am to 5:00pm, banks from 9:30am to 3:30pm from Monday to Friday with a half day on Saturday. Shops are open from 10:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Saturday.

### CURRENCY

The official currency is the Malaysian Ringgit (RM). Money can be exchanged at banks, hotels and licensed money-changers. There are also ATM machines in the towns and major airports. Credit Cards are widely accepted in urban areas.

### WATER

It is safe to drink from the taps in the major towns, however bottled water is readily available.

### ETIQUETTE

Appropriate dress is appreciated when visiting places of worship. Shoes should be removed before entering homes or longhouses. Nude sunbathing is unacceptable.

### TIPPING

A service charge is levied in Sarawak on food, drink and accommodation. Tipping is not customary.



Visitors' Information Centre, Kuching

Tel: 60-82-410 944

Fax : 60-82-256 301

Visitors' Information Centre, Sibu

Tel: 60-84-340 980

Fax : 60-84-341 280

Visitors' Information Centre, Miri

Tel: 60-85-434 181

Fax : 60-85-434 179



STB/LFT/EVT/019/1000



Sarawak is Malaysia's largest state, located on the northwestern side of the island of Borneo.

Home to an incredible diversity of tropical flora and fauna and an exciting mix of cultures, religions and traditions, Sarawak is an ideal destination for travelers seeking an authentic "jungle" experience with a variety of nature, culture and adventure tourism offerings.

Sarawak, with its low crime rate, good health system, modern infrastructure and absence of natural disasters, renders the "jungle" experience pleasant and accessible to all, with levels of comfort ranging from backpacker hostels to luxury resorts...even in the jungle !

Sarawak is easily accessible by frequent short haul flights from Kuala Lumpur and other major Malaysian cities, as well as direct flights from Singapore, Brunei, Australia (Perth), Indonesia (Pontianak), Philippines (Manila) and Hong Kong.

Internally, Sarawak is well serviced by a network of air, road and river transportation to all corners of the state.

No particular vaccinations are required, climate is warm and humid year round, with increased rainfall from November to February, English is widely spoken, credit cards are widely accepted and electric current is 220V.

Either visited on its own, or in combination with the rest of Borneo, with West Malaysia or with other South East Asian destinations, Sarawak offers a truly unforgettable travel experience !

To know more about Sarawak, Borneo's Hidden Paradise, please contact:

SARAWAK TOURISM BOARD

P.O. Box 2950, 93758 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

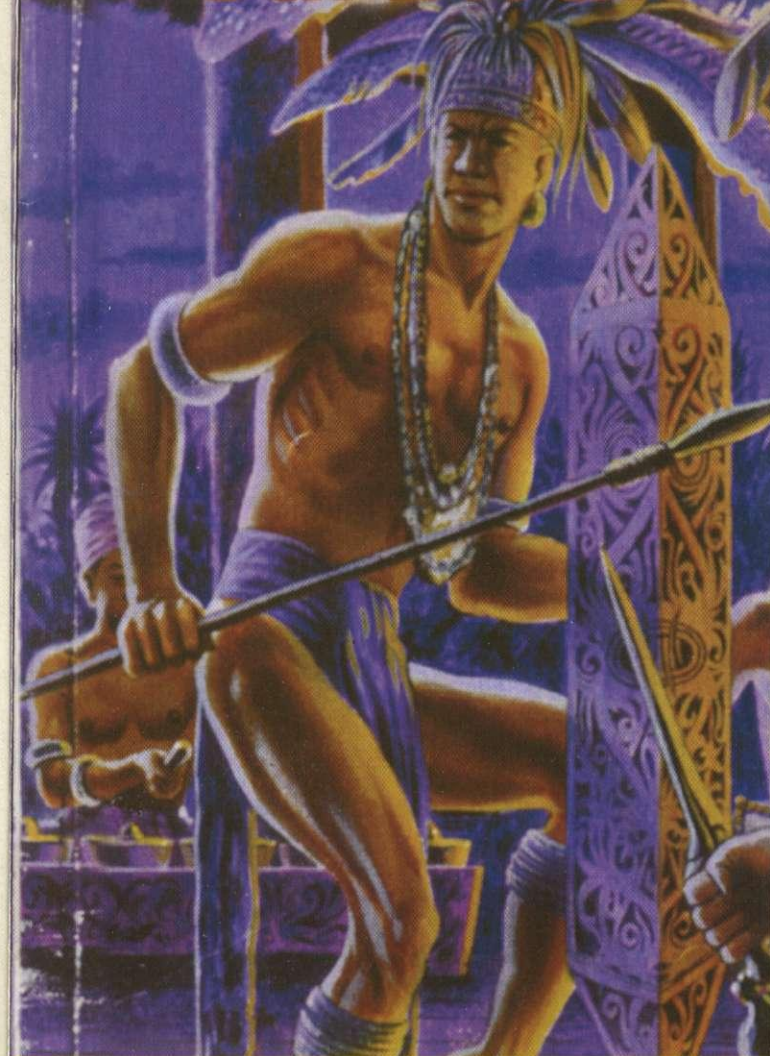
Tel : ++6082 - 423600 Fax : ++6082 - 416700

e-mail : [sarawak@po.jaring.my](mailto:sarawak@po.jaring.my)

or visit our extensive website at:

<http://www.sarawaktourism.com>

## Events & HAPPENINGS in Sarawak



THE HIDDEN PARADISE OF **BORNEO**



throughout the state from the end of May onwards. There is much feasting and merry-making, and guests are made welcome in many villages and longhouses.



### KUCHING FESTIVAL (AUGUST)

This city festival is held during the month of August. The programme changes every year, but you can be sure of food fairs, arts and crafts bazaars, cultural performances, concerts, recitals and sporting events, as well as the unique Kuching Regatta (see below) and the lively City Day Parade.

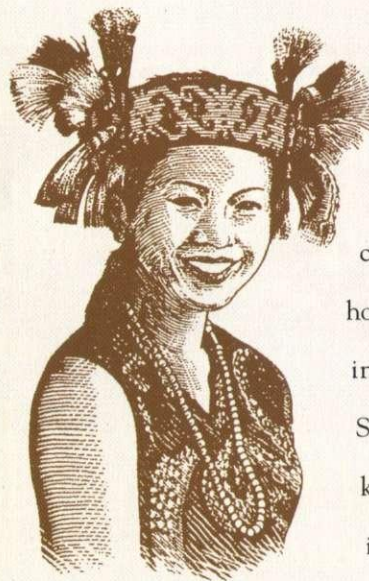


*Hornbill feathers are integral to the traditional Iban costume.*

### RAINFOREST WORLD MUSIC



### KUCHING REGATTA (AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER)



*Orang Ulu craftswomen can produce more than sixty different styles of beadwork.*

The Kuching Regatta dates from the time of the White Rajahs, when teams of warriors from all over Sarawak would compete with one another for the honour of having the fastest war-boat in the state. It is still one of Sarawak's social highlights, with all kinds of water craft competing, including the unique 'Kapal Kenyalang' - the local equivalent of dragon boats. Held every August or early September at the Kuching Waterfront.

### RAINFOREST CUP MOUNTAIN BIKE CHALLENGE (OCTOBER)

The Rainforest Cup is Southeast Asia's richest mountain bike race, and one of the most popular events on the regional bike calendar. Every year professional and amateur riders from all over the world gather at Kuching for the City Criterium Race and then move to Damai for a demanding Cross-Country Race on Malaysia's only purpose-built mountain bike race trail.



### PESTA MEOW (CAT FESTIVAL) (NOVEMBER)

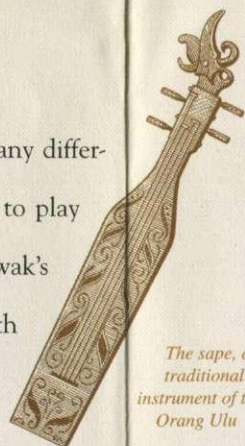
To celebrate the city's connection with cats (the name Kuching means 'cat' in Malay), the Kuching Cat Museum organizes a month-long event for cat lovers throughout November. The line-up changes annually but is sure to include a cat show, arts and crafts competitions and plenty of cat-related entertainment for the children.



## RAINFOREST WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL (AUGUST)

Every August, talented world musicians from many different countries gather at Sarawak Cultural Village to play side-by-side with traditional performers from Sarawak's villages and longhouses. Tribal rhythms blend with electro-acoustic sounds from six continents for a truly unique musical experience.

Hornbill feathers are integral to the traditional iban costume.



The sapes, a traditional instrument of the Orang Ulu



Kuching Waterfront.



## BAU INTERNATIONAL RAFT RACE (DECEMBER)

Originally a local event, the Bau International Raft Race has grown over the years and now attracts a number of overseas competitors. First construct your raft (natural materials only, please), race it down the narrow, fast flowing Upper Sarawak River, and get completely soaked in the process. The race categories include a beginner event. Early December every year.



The Bidayuh are the third largest ethnic group in Sarawak.





## Events & Happenings in Sarawak

Sarawak plays host to a wide range of events. In addition to cultural and religious festivals there are all kinds of unusual and interesting happenings, from bamboo raft races in the Borneo interior, to international sporting events and music and cultural festivals. The events listed below are just a sample, and do not include those that take place throughout Malaysia, such as Hari Raya Idul Fitri, Chinese New Year and the National Day celebrations. For further details of dates, locations and travel arrangements, please contact the Sarawak Tourism Board.

### BALLEH-KAPIT RAFT SAFARI (APRIL)

This 2-day event, held in April every year, has 8-man teams rafting down the tricky Balleh and Rejang rivers in simple home-made rafts. It gives participants and spectators a real



insight into upriver travel, re-creating the days when the Iban and Orang Ulu would raft downstream to Kapit to trade their jungle produce.

### PESTA KAUL (APRIL)



The Melanau community in Mukah celebrates the Kaul Festival every April. It is a series of ceremonies to appease the spirits of sea, land, forest and farm, as well as a ritual of purification and thanksgiving. Traditional games, music and dancing, and the warm hospitality of the Melanau people make this a very enjoyable festival.

### BORNEO MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP (APRIL AND DECEMBER)

This long-established race meet is held twice a year every April and December at the Krokong Motocross Track, a purpose-built track located near the town of Bau. It attracts top riders from throughout Asia, and also features junior and intermediate categories. There is an enormous turnout of bike-mad local

## Travel Tips

spectators for this event, and a real party atmosphere is guaranteed, along with thrills and spills aplenty.

### GAWAI TOURISM NIGHT (MAY)

The dancers and musicians of Sarawak Cultural Village present an exciting open-air theatre performance, where dance and drama combine with legend to bring Sarawak's history alive. Held every May to welcome Gawai Dayak, the harvest festival celebrated by Sarawak's indigenous people.

### GAWAI DAYAK (JUNE)

The annual rice harvest festival of the various Dayak communities, Gawai Dayak is celebrated



The keliring a carved tribal funeral pole.